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47. *Insufficiency of the salt supply in Kooduchandrams.*

Mr. P. N. Madhavan Pillai (Member, Vaikam Taluk) referred to the difficulties experienced by merchants and petty traders going from distant places to buy salt from the godowns, owing to the delay in the issue of the article. To recoup the expenses of delay in getting salt, the shopmen increase the sale price to the detriment of the buying population. Further, the traders who went in for a number of sacks were often compelled to come away with one or two. This and the variations in the weight of the sacks have resulted not only in the increased price of salt in the market, but have also made this every-day necessity scarce. He attributed the hardships the people were being put to, to the want of proper supervision on the part of the higher authorities of the department concerned.

Dewan's reply.—The attention of the Excise Commissioner will be drawn to the complaints which the member has made. If specific instances are brought to notice, Government are prepared to enquire into them and punish the subordinates at fault. Ordinarily, people must complain to the local officers and, if they do not get redress there, should then go to the higher authorities.

48. *Abolition of the system of bonding tobacco.*

Mr. Mathan Ippe (Member, Muvattupuzha Taluk) spoke of the excessive *mel-labhom* on tobacco and of the smuggling of the article from Cochin on account of its low price there, in spite of the exertions of the frontier Excise officers. This led to reduction in the consumption of the *mel-labhom* tobacco and increase in that of the smuggled one. Both the Government and the people lost thereby. He requested that the existing system might be abolished and the contract system introduced as in Cochin.

Dewan's reply.—If the system is changed, Government will lose a very large amount of revenue. Government are not prepared for that.

49. *Liquor shops adjoining estates.*

Mr. F. W. LeFeuvre (Member, Central Travancore Planters' Association) said that he believed the subject was being considered by Government, and that his Association would be grateful, if Government could give them some assurance that, in future, no new liquor shops would be put up in the vicinity of estates in the planting districts without some previous reference to the District Association. Those liquor shops on estate boundaries were very detrimental to the interests of the proprietors of the estates, and still more so, to the interests of the estate labourers

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who were tempted to waste their earnings on drink, and then, their weekly cash advances having all been spent, they ran into debt in the native bazaars for necessary provisions.

Dewan's reply.—Government cannot make any changes in the location of shops during the currency of a contract. But before new contracts are given, the question of the location of shops will be carefully considered, and the Excise Commissioner will be instructed to consult your Association also about locating the shops. But Government cannot, however, commit themselves to the view that shops will not be opened near estates. The location of shops will be done in the interests of all parties. I may add that the present contract ends nine months hence.

50. Revised tariff valuation on copra, cocoanut oil &c.

Mr. P. John of Alleppey (Member, Nominated) requested that the tariff valuation on cocoanut oil recently enhanced be reduced and that the tariff on oil-cake be done away with. He said that, out of the entire cocoanut produce of the country, only ten per cent. was being consumed in the country, the rest being exported, either as copra or as oil. The increased tariff valuation on copra would not affect the peasant population as urged in some quarters, but would be of advantage to the garden-owners. The mill-owners would also be benefited by the present tariff policy of Government, if the tariff valuation on oil had not been likewise raised. The conditions of the mill industry have considerably changed, owing to the protective tariffs introduced by foreign countries, such as Germany and America. If the mills should fail and the copra market fall entirely into the hands of the foreign manufacturer, the consequences would be disastrous to the country. The owners of gardens would then have to be content with the pittance which the foreign agents might give. Government, he said, have done something, but they set about the matter half-heartedly. They have not only raised the tariff valuation on copra and cocoanut oil , but they have also introduced export duty on oil-cake for the first time. The price of punnac being only Rs. 20 per candy, any higher valuation, as at present fixed, would be against all principle. The member also referred to the statistics of trade, the charges for transport of copra, oil &c., and said that an unequal competition with foreign countries could not be maintained for long, unless Government came to their help.

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